

September 09, 2008 |
NEWS

[News](#)

Type Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

[Print](#)

[Email](#)

[Most Popular](#)



Disqualification puts transit ballot measure in doubt

Invalid signatures found; backers pledge to appeal

by [Glen Creno](#) - Aug. 12, 2008 12:00 AM
The Arizona Republic

Arizona's Secretary of State's Office on Monday tossed out a \$42.6 billion transportation initiative aimed at the measure say they will fight to put it before voters.

State officials disqualified the initiative, which sought to raise the state sales tax by a penny per dollar, for voter signatures.

The measure needed 153,365 signatures to make the ballot, but was about 15,000 short, according to the can be rejected for a variety of reasons, from procedural filing problems to signatures from people not regi

The TIME Coalition, which crafted the initiative, is challenging the decision, saying it believes it can prove valid.

TIME representatives Monday were examining the rejected signatures. If they can challenge enough of th a lawsuit to reinstate the signatures. Attorneys were drafting the complaint Monday.

If they can't challenge enough of them, it's unclear what the group will do or what will happen to the transp

"Based on our analysis of the signatures that were thrown out by the secretary of state and Maricopa Cou enough to qualify for the ballot," TIME spokesman Tom Ziemba said.

The statewide transportation-improvement initiative would increase the state sales tax by a penny per doll Revenue would pay for freeways, trains and buses. Critics of the plan say a tax increase won't fly with vot TIME gathered 260,698 signatures in favor of the initiative and submitted them by the July 3 deadline. Of 1 during the review.

Verifying the signatures

The Secretary of State's Office and all of Arizona's counties have a hand in verifying signatures on an initi

The secretary of state takes the first look, reduces the pool by tossing out invalid signatures. Then a samp Each county recorder's office then reviews the signatures.

Maricopa County accounted for 83 percent of TIME's signatures. TIME said its valid-signature rate outside percent to low 80 percent range. In Maricopa, the rate was 55 percent. TIME representatives are trying to

signatures invalidated by the Maricopa County Recorder's Office was so high.

Karen Osborne, Maricopa County's director of elections, said the secretary of state sent the county 10,445 ruled invalid. People not registered to vote in the county made up the bulk of the invalid signatures - more signatures were due to things such as duplicate signatures, signers who were too young to vote or who re petition, and signatures that didn't match the signatures on file.

More challenges

The clock is ticking for TIME. Another week or two of legal squabbling could leave the group with only a few voters if the measure makes the ballot at all.

Even then, TIME could be faced with a separate challenge. A judge ruled earlier this month that a legislative ballot-measure descriptions tried to give the transportation initiative a negative slant. The judge ordered that ruling could be appealed.

The deadline for printing ballots and publicity material is around the end of this month, said Kevin Tyne, secretary of the Office. Backers of the measure say there's enough remaining time.

Tyne and Osborne said their offices followed the law in reviewing the signatures and defended their office: improperly invalidated thousands of signatures.

"If it ends up as a court challenge, we'll be happy to defend our process," Tyne said.

TIME is a collection of business, political and other groups promoting the initiative. Gov. Janet Napolitano spokeswoman, Jeanine L'Ecuyer, said she still does.

"Her support has not wavered," L'Ecuyer said. "This isn't done."

TIME isn't considering what it will do if the measure doesn't make it, said David Martin, co-chairman of the president of the Arizona Chapter of the Associated General Contractors. "We're going to make the ballot,"

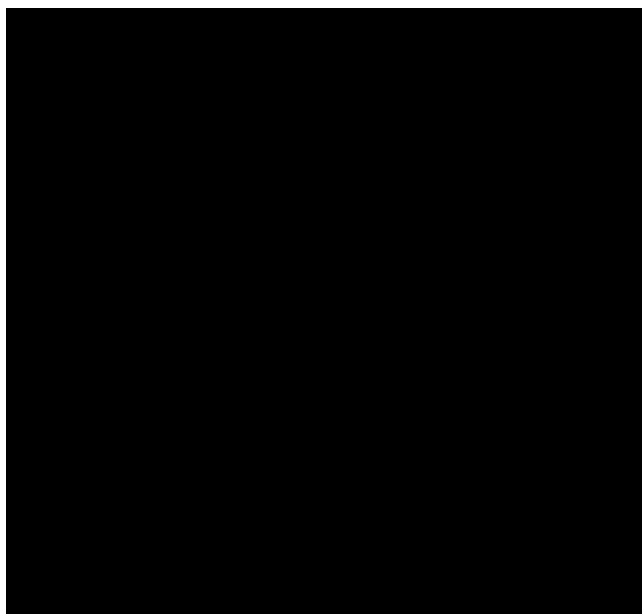
Type Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

[Print](#)

[Email](#)

[Most Popular](#)





[more video](#) »

More on this topic

Signature validation

The Arizona secretary of state disqualified the statewide transportation-improvement initiative because it lacked the minimum number of signatures needed to qualify for the November ballot. Here's how the validation process worked:

- The TIME Coalition filed a petition with 260,698 signatures with the Secretary of State's Office before the July 3 deadline.
- The Secretary of State's Office reviewed the signatures. It removed ineligible signatures and invalid petition sheets. All told, the office removed 21,824 invalid signatures, leaving 238,874 eligible signatures. The signature must be that of a registered voter to be valid.
- Random samples of 5 percent of the remaining signatures then were sent to county recorders statewide, who checked signatures and voter registration. When the recorders were done, 122,247 valid signatures remained. That's about 15,000 short of the minimum number needed.

What's next?

- TIME is examining the rejected signatures.
- A lawsuit could be filed in the next few days against the Secretary of State's Office and the Maricopa County Recorder's Office, contesting their invalidation of signatures. The case would likely be heard as a single complaint to speed the process.
- Printing of publicity materials for eligible measures and ballots starts around the end of this month.

- If TIME does not file a lawsuit, the initiative won't be on the November ballot.



LATEST NEWS HEADLINES

[Palin billed state of Alaska for nights spent at home](#)

[2 arrested in theft of copper wire](#)

[Ex-grocery store employee arrested outside Bashas'](#)

[Mom's text threat spurs school lockdown](#)

[Making a case for raising the driving age](#)

[268 try out for Suns spots](#)

[Man found in pool dies](#)

[Police: Mom, 2 teen girls kill man in \\$15 robbery](#)

[2 new polls show McCain passing Obama](#)

[Reports: US remains 'dangerously vulnerable'](#)

